

[0020] The inventive system is a comprehensive materials procurement, management, and distribution system, and thus may contain privileged and confidential information. Therefore, it is necessary to constrain users to functions and data views appropriate to their functions. TIMS supports a user security level assignment that is used by system code to constrain user access.

[0021] A requirement of one of the TIMS sites is that material be consigned. The payment for this consigned material generally takes place in the form of a periodic interest payment and finally as a materials payment upon delivery. Multiple interest periods are allowed with the material coming into inventory and leaving during any two points in time. TIMS automatically calculates the appropriate interest payment and presents an itemized text log detailing the components of this interest payment at invoice generation.

[0022] The global implementation of TIMS requires that costs be maintained in terms of local currency types. TIMS supports the capture of cost data in arbitrary currency types.

[0023] Material may be purchased and duty suspended pending the determined final delivery point. TIMS documents the receipt and delivery duty status.

[0024] Additional features and advantages of the invention will be set forth in the description that follows, and in part will be apparent from the description, or may be learned by practice of the invention. The objectives and other advantages of the invention will be realized and attained by the structure particularly pointed out in the written description and claims hereof as well as the appended drawings.

**[0025]** To achieve these and other advantages and in accordance with the purpose of the invention, as embodied and broadly described, the present invention provides an inventory management system including customer inquiry/quotation means for obtaining inventory and non-inventory product information, forecasting means for identifying planned sales, sales order means for providing general information about the sale, the products, charges and services required to produce end products, purchase order means for receiving and providing product and specification information to the supplier and accepting and generating an identifier for the purchase, reporting means for presenting information to a user of the system, adjusting means for modifying inventory information, and, query means for viewing inventory and transaction information.

**[0026]** Furthermore, the present invention provides a method for forecasting future material needs, the method including creating a customer demand forecast, transforming the customer demand forecast into a materials requirements, making an inventory query, and fulfilling the materials requirements.

**[0027]** Additionally, the information management system also provides an inventory management system comprising an inventory and sales management means resident on a first hardware and operating system, an accounting means resident on a second hardware and operating system, and an interfacing means for permitting inventory-costing transactions to be shared and transferred between the inventory and sales management means and the accounting means.

[0028] It is to be understood that both the foregoing general description and the following detailed description are exemplary and explanatory and are intended to provide further explanation of the invention as claimed.

### **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

[0029] The accompanying drawings, which are included to provide further understanding of the invention and are incorporated in and constitute a part of this specification, illustrate embodiments of the invention and together with the description serve to explain the principles of the invention.

[0030] In the drawings:

[0031] Fig. 1 shows an inventory and sales management system of the present invention;

[0032] Fig. 2 shows an inventory/accounting interface system of the present invention;

[0033] Fig. 3 shows a process of the inventory/accounting interface system of the present invention; and

[0034] Fig. 4 shows a process of the inventory and sales management system of the present invention.

### **DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS**

[0035] Reference will now be made in detail to the preferred embodiments of the present invention, examples of which are illustrated in the accompanying drawings. Wherever